



Raking

A swath down memory lane

8-29-92 Herald



Some people collect stamps while others coins or baseball trading cards. Hal Wing of Springfield is into antiques — specifical-

ly farm equipment. He dusted off this McCormick-Deering mower — circa 1890 — earlier this week to cut five acres of

alfalfa. The two American shire draft horses also pull other pieces of his collection which numbers more than 30.

Herald Photo/Rod Collett



farm & ranch

living

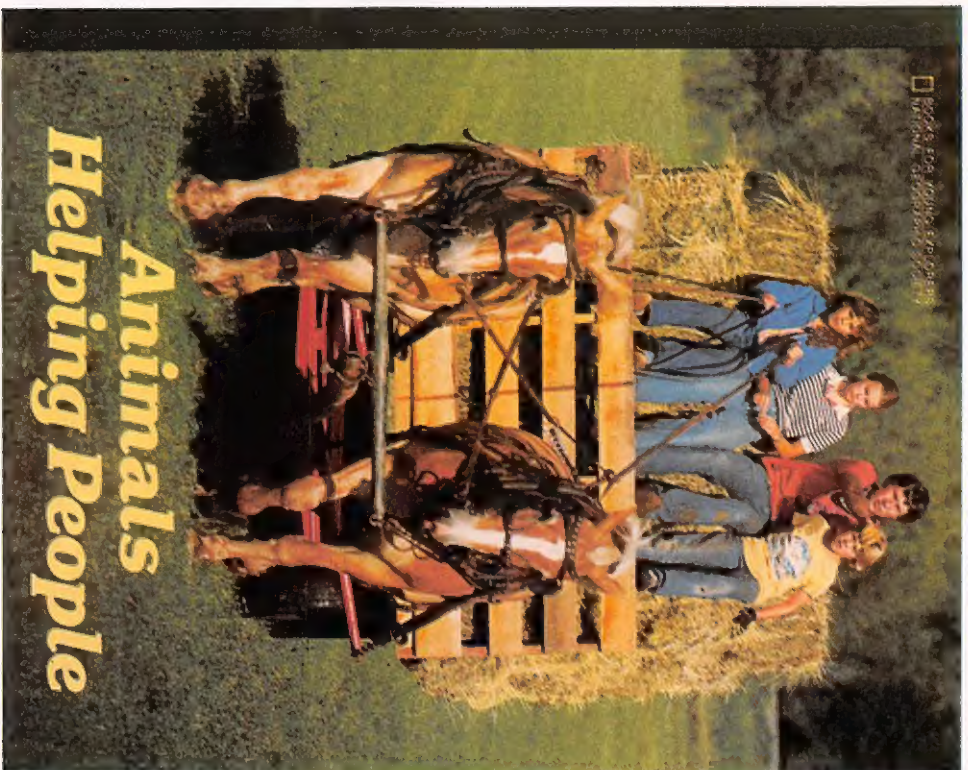
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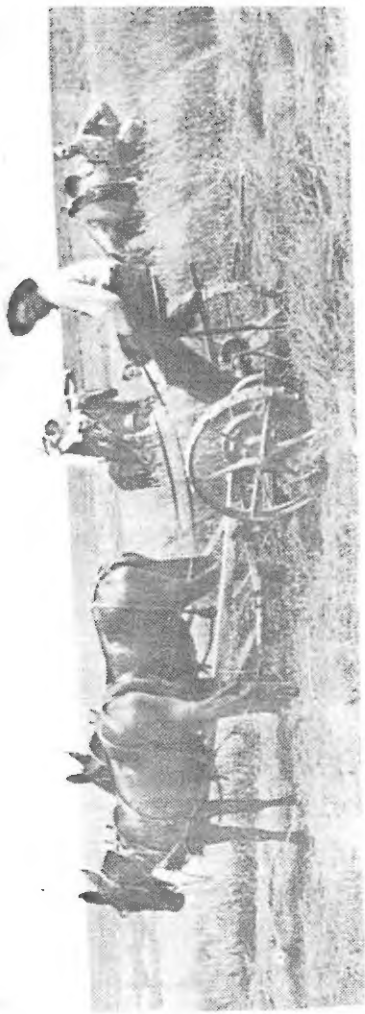


Brigham Murdoch on mower



Brigham Murdoch family and friends hauling hay



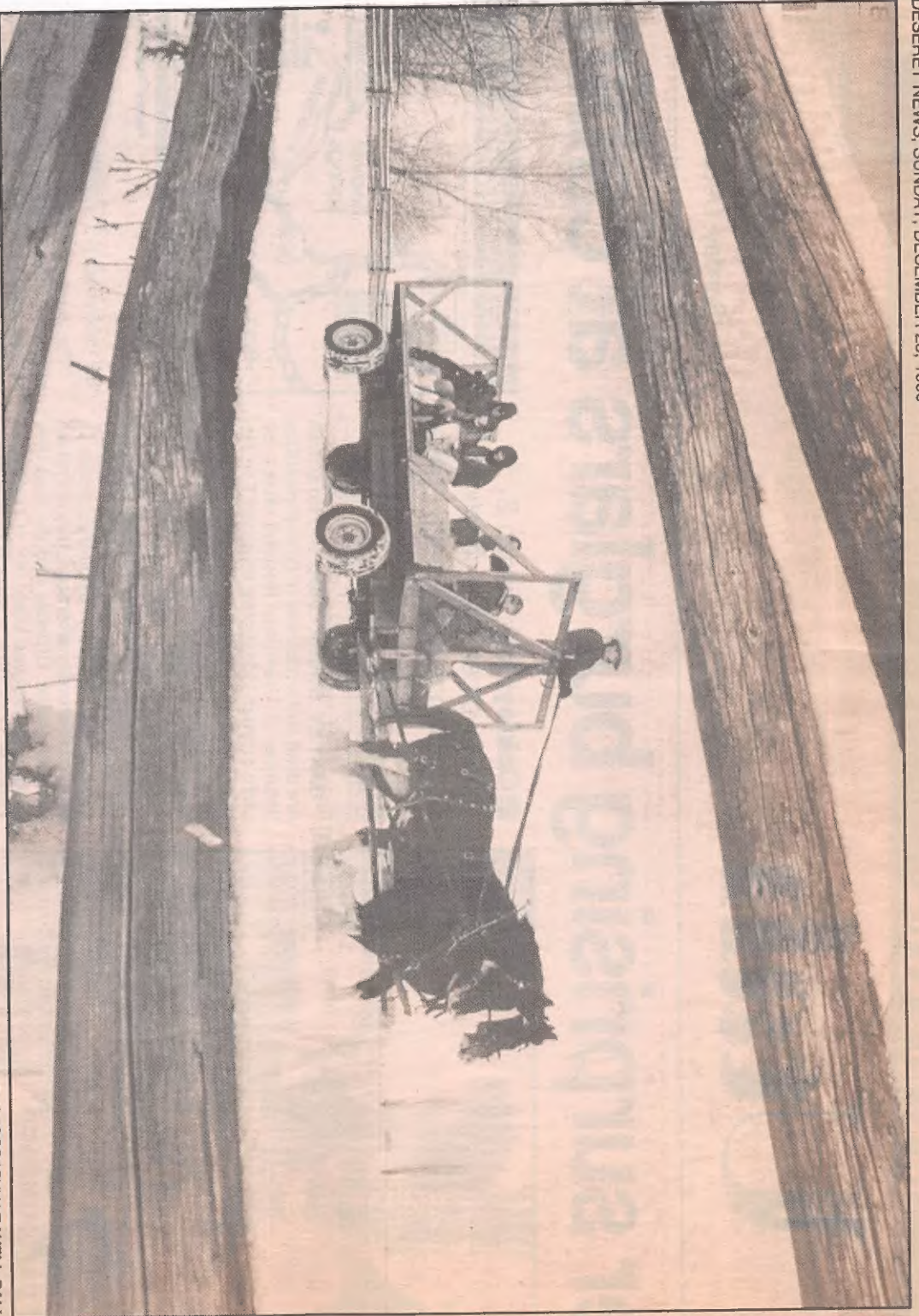


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DESERET NEWS, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 23, 1990



PHOTOGRAPHY/ RAVELL CALL

MEANDERINGS

Old hay wagon is lonely relic of changing culture

By Dennis Smith 9-26-92

A new road is being opened into the fields south of the Heaps' house just as you enter Alpine. It terminates in a little cul-de-sac popped off to the north behind their orchard at the base of the hill below Duane Shepherd's place.

There, tucked behind the trees in a pasture overgrown with cheat grass, sits an ancient hay wagon. It has to be pre-World War II and even pre-Depression era, since it was never refitted with rubber tires to replace the wooden ones that still give it a sense of weathered majesty.

Objects of the past disappear so subtly that we seldom notice they are gone. Then, once in a while you come across something so totally out of character with the times that you are stricken with a wave of awareness.

The hay wagon I saw the other day sparked one of those moments of awareness. Such a familiar part of our past, yet so foreign to present priorities and function, this wagon, never refitted for a trailer hitch, had been last pulled when teams of horses were common. It was never designed to clatter over the asphalt roads now invading its hiding place.

When I was young, the farm still offered a main source for summer jobs. I remember toiling atop a load of hay, rising with it higher and higher as the forkfuls kept coming, trying to keep ahead, tromping the hay down tight in the corners, at the same time

being careful to avoid the next mass of itchy dry leaves and the sharp tines of the pitchfork.

I recall triumphant rides from the fields back to the barn atop the teetering load, swaying back and forth in a rhythmic scene of empowerment.

Somehow, the wagon recalls an image described to me of a tragic moment in my grandfather's life, out in the field with my Uncle LeGrand and Elwood. They were just boys then, loading corn stalks on the wagon when the polio virus or whatever it was hit Grandpa with a force so hard that he collapsed like a sack of potatoes.

They pulled him in under the comforting shade of the hay wagon, out of the rays of the merciless sun, and finally were able to get him up onto the wagon for the long trip back to the house — the beginning of a long journey into darkness, full of doctors and long months in bed. He was later fitted with a full leg brace that allowed him to walk

again. But for the rest of his life, for all the time I would know him, he dragged his foot and swung it forward with each step, like a bothersome burden, a burden that in the end forced him to sell the farm and buy the little bungalow in American Fork where we visited on Sundays.

Looking at this old wagon, I notice that the wooden wheels are so old and fragile that if you tried to pull it very far they would quickly crumble and cave in clear to the axles. Reminds me of Grandpa's struggle and my own mortality.

I think I'll keep track of the old wagon out behind the new subdivision. I am curious how long it will last with its rear flank exposed the way it is now. The sound of nail guns and the clattering of concrete forms will be a fairly familiar sound out there now for the next few years.

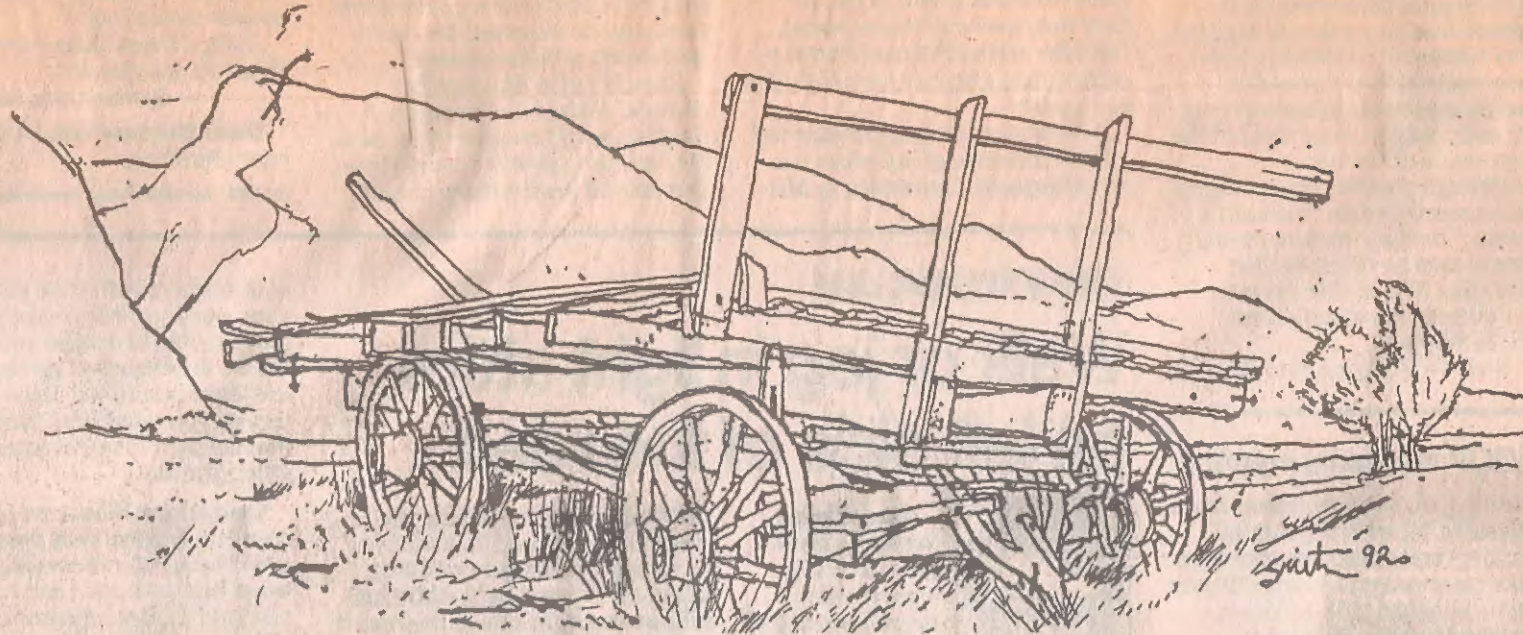
Before you know it, that corner of pasture will have been transformed into a cluster of yards with fledging maples and concrete

sidewalks, lawns and honey locust trees, and the sound of power mowers filling the air of early evening.

Grandpa, I hear you walking along the sidewalk toward the back of your bungalow in American Fork, with a clarity more familiar and emphatic than when you were here before the storm and the fond farewells, before the demise of your generation of hay wagons slowly crumbling away in the high weeds.

● Note: Two weeks after writing this, I drove into the subdivision and glanced up toward the hay wagon. Already the spot where it had been was vacant. Immediately I began to wonder where it had gone. Who had taken it, and why? Had it been seen as a pile of weathered junk, or an article of value to be refitted and renewed as the antique it really had become with time?

Dennis Smith is an artist and writer living in Highland, Utah County.



DENNIS SMITH

"Loading the Bundle Wagon,"
below, an oil on canvas by A.D.
Shaw, is one of the many striking
artworks to be shown at
Park City's Saguaro Gallery.





Some farmers of the Paris Basin. Nets are tied over the oxen's mouths to prevent them from eating the crops.

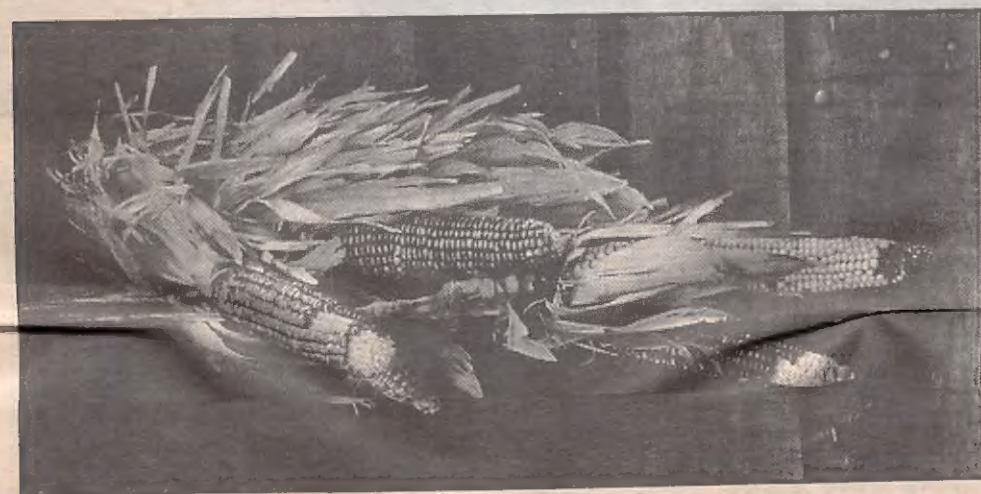
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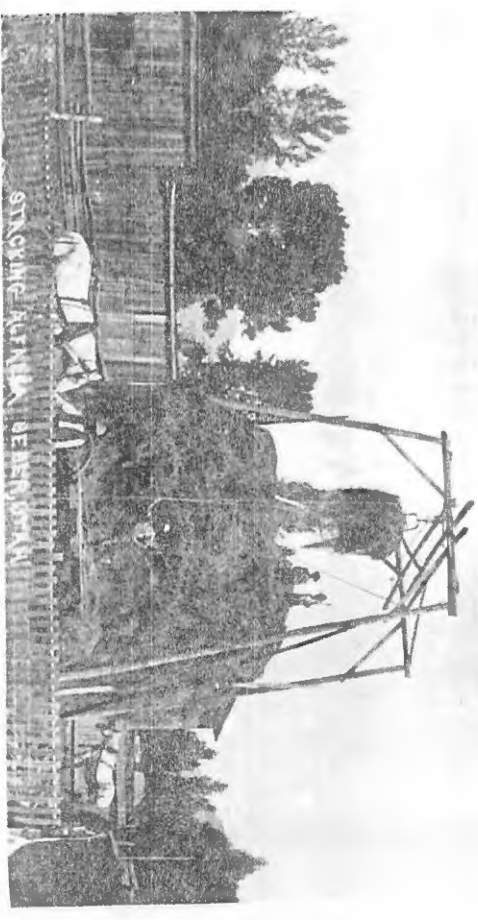


Visitors to Wheeler Farm go out for a hayride, above, in the crisp December air. Michelle Stephens, top right, looks out a window in one of the farm's historic houses.

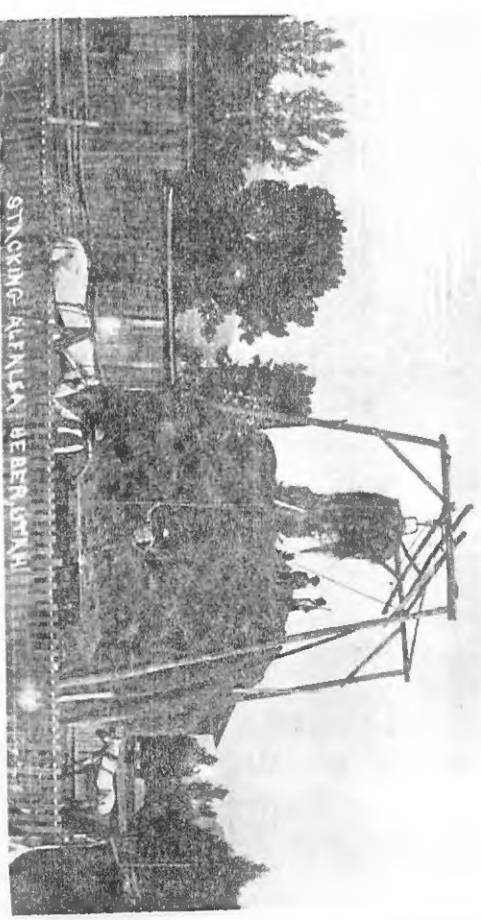
22 Dec 1991



Stacking



Farmers in the valley used this method to build their hay stacks until the early 1910's.



Farmers in the valley used this method to build their hay stacks until the early 1910's.

in Cedar City Early Hay Bailer

